



Seattle Design Commission

Revised

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

February 2nd 2006

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

David Spiker
Chair

Pam Beyette

Adam Christiansen

Karen Kiest

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Senior Staff

Projects Reviewed

South Forest Street – Partial Street Vacation

Seattle Bike Trail Plan

Northgate/Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel

Commission Business

Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall

Convened: 9:30am

Adjourned: 5:00pm

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair

Adam Christiansen

Karen Kiest

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Dennis Ryan

Darrell Vange

John Hoffman

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano

Layne Cubell

Tom Iurino

Valerie Felts



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Development

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Revised

02 Feb 2006 Project: South Forest Street – Partial Street Vacation

Phase: Street Vacation

Previous Reviews: none

Presenters: George Blomberg, Port of Seattle
Peter Hummell, Anchor Environmental
Beverly Barnett, Seattle Department of Transportation

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170)

Action

The Design Commission approves the Partial Street Vacation for South Forest Street based on a vote of 6:2 with several conditions:

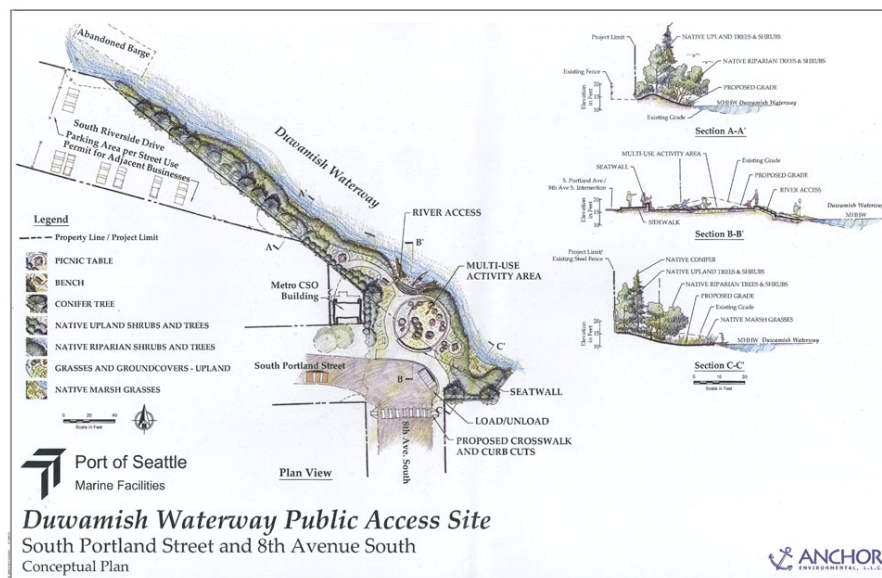
- **It would like proponents to return at a later date with more details on management of the pedestrian/bike access way by East Marginal Way.**
- **The Commission is concerned about preservation of views from East Marginal Way and requests that the proponents return with more detailed plans of the proposed changes by the existing bridge, particularly as it relates to views from East Marginal Way and the adjoining bike path.**
- **The Commission believes that the public benefits package that includes pedestrian and bicycle improvements by the Port property and upgrading South Portland Park is inadequate; and:**
- **encourages stronger connections to Riverside Drive at the north end of the park.**
- **recommends against including false marine artifacts at the South Portland site.**
- **urges the team to ensure improvements are consistent with neighborhood needs.**

Proponents Presentation

Port of Seattle staff along with their environmental consultants gave a presentation on plans to vacate a portion of South Forest Street which are currently submerged lands to accommodate the smoother function of container ship operations between Terminal 25 and Terminal 30. The planned vacation was first acknowledged in the 1985 Duwamish Public Access Plan. Part of the proposed public benefits package will be on site, consisting of a new pedestrian and bicycle path along East Marginal Way, and part will be off-site improvements that enhance the shoreline access at South Portland Street.

Commissioner Questions and Comments

- Asks who will maintain the site
 - The Port will build and maintain the site
- Asks what became of bike access found in the 1985 plan
 - Community meetings were held, with no comments regarding bike access. There is no existing bike route at the site.
- Asks if there are the environmental consequences of the bridge
 - Present day environmental guidelines are adhered to
- Asks about handling of stormwater
 - Plan is fully compliant with City standards
- Asks if there is a guarantee of no filling at the site in the future
 - Once the Port owns the site there is no guarantee
- Asks if there is economic value to the vacation
 - It is a public enhancement and an asset to the Port
- Asks if plan meets the goals of public shoreline access
 - Yes
- Would like team to consider reducing the large expanse of asphalt by the L junction along South Park



02 Feb 2006 Project: Seattle Bicycle Trail Plan

Phase: Follow-up Briefing
Previous Reviews: 7/21/05 (briefing)
Presenters: Pete Lagerway, Seattle Department of Transportation
Pauh Wang, Seattle Department of Transportation
Attendees: none

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169)

Action

- **The Commission appreciates the presentation regarding a proposed signage program for bike routes throughout the City to facilitate easier wayfinding and greater public safety**
- **The Commission recommends signage should be simple, elegant, and clear and that use of numbers is the simplest way to establish hierarchy and eliminate clutter**
- **The Commission appreciates the thoughtful and comprehensive approach and looks forward to future updates**

Proponents Presentation

The Commission appreciates the presentation regarding a new proposed signage program for bike routes throughout the City to facilitate easier wayfinding and greater public safety. Legibility and clarity of signage in terms of color, shape, icons, and letters vs. numbers were detailed. A hierarchical naming system integrated into a signage program is being considered as are painted surfaces on paved trails. Special attention will be given to gateways and entries. The Commission appreciates the thoughtful and comprehensive approach taken by SDOT and looks forward to future updates. The Commission recommended that signage should be elegant, simple and clear and agreed that numbers are the simplest way to establish an easily understood hierarchy. They urged the team to work on eliminating signage clutter and gave their support to painted pavement as another means to denote hierarchy.



02 Feb 2006 Project: Northgate/Thornton Creek Water Quality Channel

Phase: Schematic Design Update

Previous Reviews: April 23, (2005 Concept Design), November 3, 2005
(Schematic Design)

Presenters: Jackie Kirn, Office of Policy and Management
Tom Fawthrop, Seattle Public Utilities
Miranda Maupin, Seattle Public Utilities
Marcia Iwasaki, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs
Melanie Davies, SvR Design
Peggy Gaynor, Gaynor Landscape Architects

Attendees: Lyle Bicknell, DPD
Kristian Kofoed
Jeff Reibman, Weber and Thompson
Greg Giraldo, SVR Design
Erich Ellis, SVR Design
Connie Zimmerman, SDOT

Time: 1 hour

(SDC Ref. # 228)

Action

- **The commission appreciates the presentation on the schematic design, which has evolved considerably since last fall to reinforce project goals and stakeholder values**
- **The commission appreciates the dynamic quality of the project including use of appropriate materials and that it should aspire to win an ASLA award**
- **It recommends attention be paid to pavement and path materials to facilitate year round use**
- **It recommends a decrease in the amount of vegetation/trees so not to interfere with viewpoints on the site and recognizes the year round appeal of the water element.**
- **It strongly encourages greater study of interface with Lorig and ERA Care sites and and promenade to increase the perception of public open space and mitigate building height.**

Proponents Presentation

The Commission appreciated the presentation on the schematic design update, which has evolved considerably since last fall to reinforce project goals and stakeholder values. Project goals are 1) to improve water quality of Thornton Creek and 2) to provide pleasing public open space that is distinct from the adjacent private development. Project goals are 1) to improve water quality of Thornton Creek and 2) to provide pleasing public open space. Stakeholder values concern: 1) moving water 2) aesthetics 3) safety 4) pedestrian movement 5) water quality and 6) cost controls.

Both the topography of the site and an art program were described. The topography consists of many grades, views in and out are an issue and public access is a challenge, as is proximity to adjacent development on either side. The drainage system emulates a cascade waterfall, emitting water sounds as would a natural waterfall, and providing a rich pedestrian experience of this is a key goal of the project. The art components are being reviewed by the Seattle Arts Commission.

Commissioner Questions

- Does the channel need maintenance?
 - Yes, there is truck access for bobcats.

- How is the connection of business to the neighborhood accomplished?
 - Pedestrians do not go down to the promenade then return back up
- Have precautions been taken to prevent children from entering the channel?
 - Yes, it is designed to make entry difficult for children while at the same time enabling exit from the channel
- Would recommend permeable surfaced paths
- Vegetation/trees should be reduced, so as not to obscure viewpoints
- Advise additional study of relationship of housing to promenade
- Materials used should be appropriate to the project



02 Feb 2006 Project: Commission Business

Staff Discussion

The commission reviewed a Central Waterfront Plan draft letter. It also discussed the upcoming Commission retreat to be held February 9, 2006.

Time: 1/2 hour (SDC Ref. # 168)

02 Feb 2006 Project: Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall
Phase: Design Update
Previous Reviews: September 15, 2005 (Briefing); many previous
Presenters: Ron Paarnen, Washington State Department of Transportation
Bob Chandler, Seattle Department of Transportation
Steve Pearce, Seattle Department of Transportation
Attendees: Jane Dunkel, Office of City Auditor
Time: 2 hours (SDC Ref. # 228)

Action

- **The Commission appreciates the presentation by WSDOT and SDOT relating to work in progress.**
- **It recognizes a new team structure – a blend of city, state, and private consultants.**
- **It also appreciates recognition by the team of the need to close a funding gap of \$400 million and the need to better inform the public of different scenarios being considered, such as the \$2 billion cost of the no-build option, and the tradeoffs inherent in the construction phasing approaches, which vary with each option.**
- **The Commission appreciates the team's willingness to share information on work in progress on this very complex project and commends the team on its focus on a more vibrant city in the future.**
- **The Commission reaffirms its endorsement of the tunnel option and agrees the no-build option may be misunderstood by the public to be a no-cost option, a point that needs to be corrected.**
- **The Commission appreciates the incremental approach now being taken with the issue of the lid, and supports maximizing the lid structure as it did last year, but recognizes that the all-lid option may not be all good or the most beneficial in the long run. 3-dimensional site conditions with the lid deserve more study and the best solution may prove to be a complex mix of volumes, not a simple "lid" structure. Attention should be paid to the way in which the lid connects to upland development to the east.**
- **The Commission very much appreciates refinements to minimize the hump at the Aquarium and the overall width of the tunnel and all ramps, as well as a simpler lowered Aurora scheme to the north and streamlined design at the south end.**

Proponents Presentation

The proponents provided updated information on the following aspects of the project:

- Costs
- Core project scope
- Closing \$400 million funding gap
- Lowered Aurora Avenue North End improvements
 - Simpler, fewer crossings
 - Lower cost than at last review
 - Mercer Street remains under Highway 99
 - 6th Avenue lowered to meet Mercer Street
 - Bike trail on Mercer Street
 - Future streetcar on Harrison or Thomas Streets
- South end improvements
 - New design to reduce size of structure and simplify
 - Fewer ramps
 - Less impact on railroad
- Elliot Avenue on-ramp will remain

Steinbreuck Park Lid

Workshops with the Design Commission were held last year, which included discussion of the lid. A subsequent internal Viaduct team charette was then held, from which design guidelines for the lid were developed. The lid component represents a 3-D challenge and deserves additional study. It would be beneficial to maximize options for future development over the unlidded portion.

Commissioner Comments

- Recommends consideration of how downtown works in the design
- Tunnel no-built option cost is \$2 billion, expresses concern over public sentiment related to costs
- Recommend exploring technology to reduce highway noise
- If either end is built first, through traffic reflecting 60% of users can be accommodated

Stacked Tunnel Alternative

